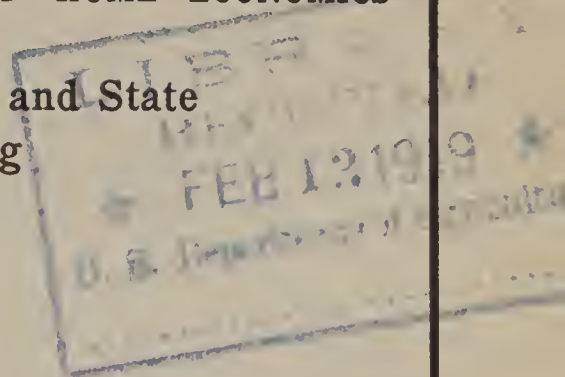


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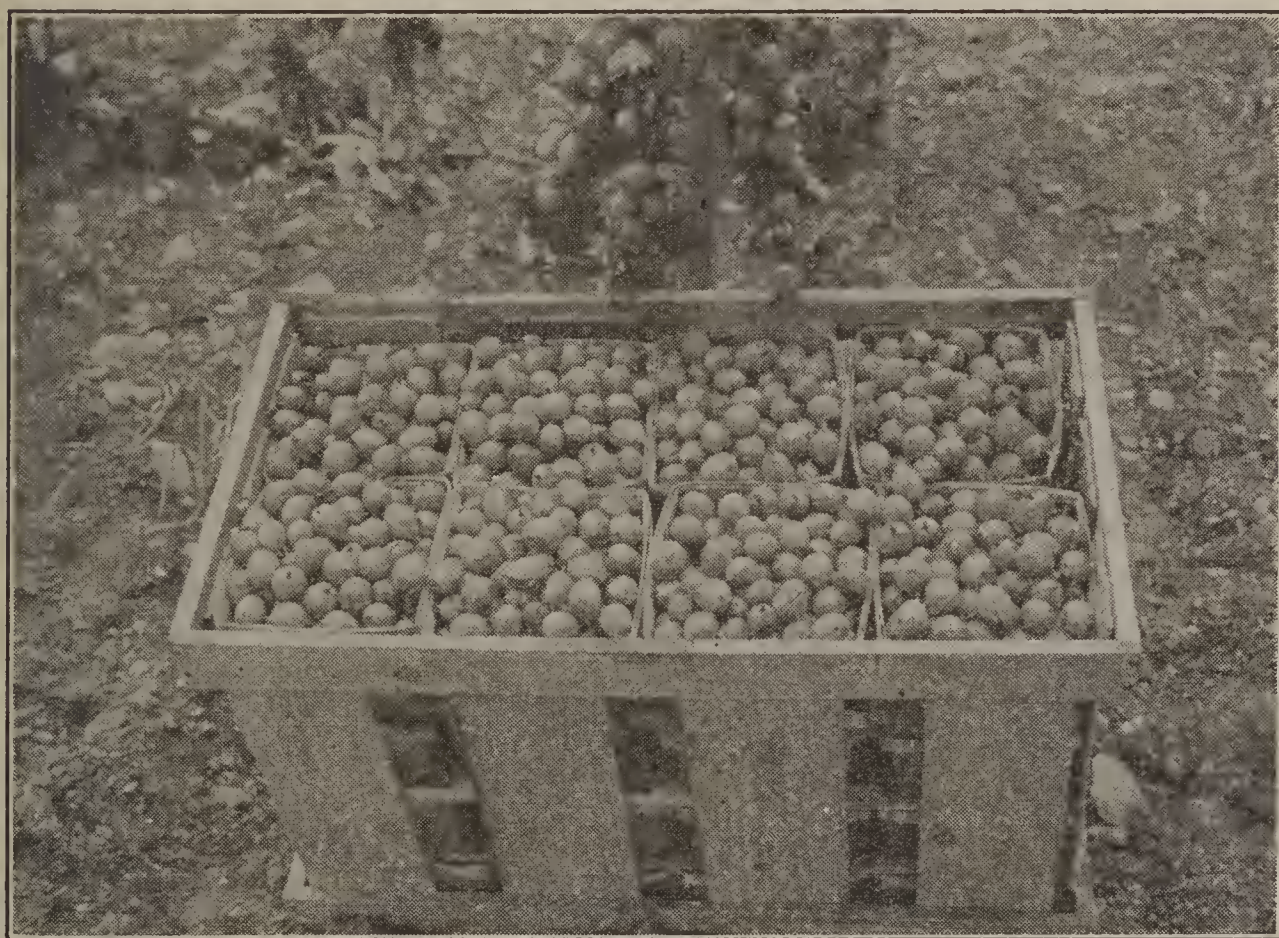
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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS

United States Department of Agriculture and State
Agricultural Colleges Cooperating



CURRENT AND GOOSEBERRY CULTURE



A 32-quart crate of gooseberries ready for market

Office of Extension Work South
States Relations Service

CURRENT AND GOOSEBERRY CULTURE

AS CLUB GIRLS gain knowledge and experience in their tenth-acre plots they begin planning for permanent gardens. In Maryland, West Virginia, northern Kentucky, and the mountain regions of other States, gooseberries and currants will prove satisfactory additions to these perennial gardens. Since these fruits are natives of cool climates, their extensive culture should not be undertaken in the warmer parts of the United States.

An abundant yield will amply repay all effort spent on gooseberries and currants. These will furnish a pleasing and valuable variety to the family's diet. There is also a good market for the fresh berries.

Delicious jams and jellies have long since made the currant and gooseberry favorites. Recipes for special 4-H brands of these products may be found in Farmers' Bulletin 853, Home Canning of Fruits and Vegetables.

The proper selection of the variety to be grown, the soil in which to plant them, and the later cultivation and pruning are essentials in the successful growing of these berries. Instructions on these points are furnished in this circular.

Farmers' Bulletin 1024 gives more detailed information on the culture of gooseberries and currants.

CURRENT AND GOOSEBERRY CULTURE

In many counties in certain sections of the South, work of this kind should be taken up by the girls who have had two or three years' experience in the clubs. Circular No. A-82, from this office, gives suggestions in regard to having the girls begin certain perennial vegetables and fruits in their gardens after they have grown such crops as tomatoes and beans for one or more years. Doubtless many of the leading agents and best trained girls will be able to take up the culture of currants and gooseberries as well as other small fruits in sections well adapted to them.

The gooseberry and currant should be grown by canning-club members, only in Maryland, West Virginia, Northern Kentucky, and the mountain regions of the other States. Both of these fruits are natives of cool climates and will not do well in the warmer parts of the United States. They both grow in the form of a bush and their culture is very similar. They are used for similar purposes, for making jelly, jam, and other preserves. Currants, however, seem to be liked better as a rule by the American people than gooseberries.

Selection and preparation of the soil.—Select the one-tenth of an acre of ground for growing currants and gooseberries in the coolest place possible. Choose a northern or northeastern slope for the plants if possible. The soil



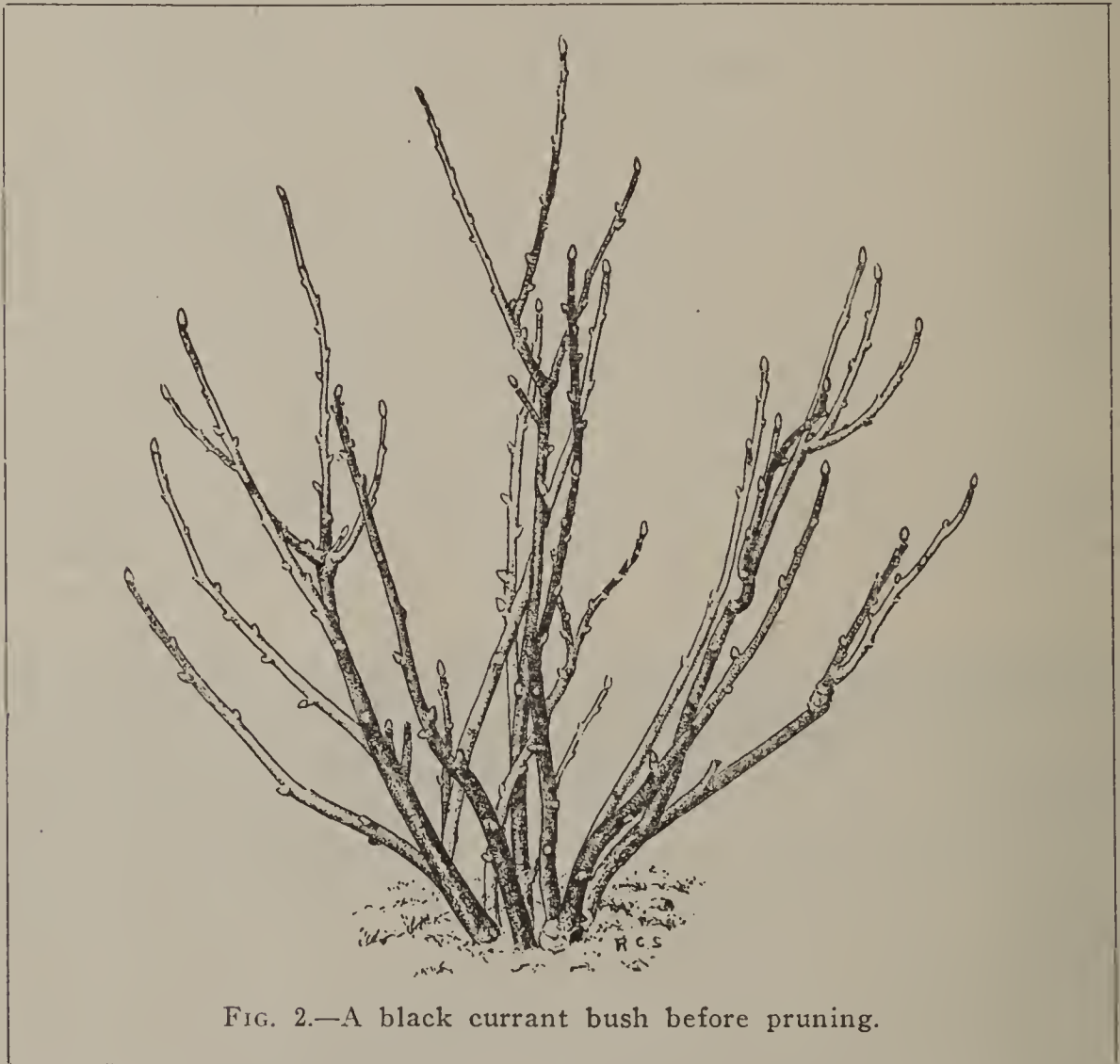
FIG. 1.—Currant plants heeled in. They may be held in this manner for a considerable period of time in good condition awaiting permanent planting.

should be well drained and fertile. One of the heavier types, such as silt or clay soil, is preferable to a lighter type, but almost any fertile, well-drained soil may be used.

Plow the soil just as early in the spring as possible and apply two wagon-loads of stable manure. Harrow this in. If more convenient, the manure may be applied before plowing.

The Downing gooseberry is the best variety to use. There are other good new varieties such as the Carrie, Josslyn, Oregon, and Poorman, but these have not been sufficiently tested in the South to be sure that it will pay to grow them.

Only the red currants should be grown in any quantity. The white varieties are not generally very popular, though a few mixed with the red sorts are very attractive. The white varieties are not as acid and are not liked as well



as the red for preserving. You may take your choice of several varieties of red currants, all of which are very good. The Perfection, London (*London Market*), Red Cross, Wilder, and Albert (*Prince Albert*) are all desirable. The White Imperial is the best white variety.

Securing the plants.—Either strong 1-year-old or 2-year-old plants may be used. These are plants that have grown respectively one and two seasons in the nursery. Planting may be done in late autumn or early spring. Currant and gooseberry plants start into growth very early in the spring. Therefore special pains should be taken, if they are to be set in the spring, to secure plants in a perfectly dormant condition. The order for them, if placed with a nursery, should be given some time in advance of the actual planting date.

Planting.—The plants should be set permanently as soon as received, or “heeled in” if they cannot be set at once. (See fig. 1.) To do this, dig a trench

in a well-drained, and if possible a shaded place, large enough to take in the roots. Then separate the plants, if they were tied in bundles when received, place the roots of each plant in the trench and pack the soil firmly about them. The plants should be put as close together in the trench as possible. The plants, as they are put in the trench, may be placed in an inclined position rather than an upright one, as when planting permanently. Handled in this way, they can be held in good condition for some time awaiting suitable conditions for permanent planting. If the soil becomes too dry, the plants should be watered. They should be set, when planted permanently, 4 feet apart in the rows and the rows 6 feet apart. It will require 180 plants at these distances to set the one-tenth of an acre. In preparing the plants for setting, cut off all broken roots. Cut the tops back, so that when planted they will not be more than 8 to 12 inches high. The plants should be set an inch or so deeper than they stood in the nursery. Be sure that the soil is carefully filled in about the roots and made very firm.

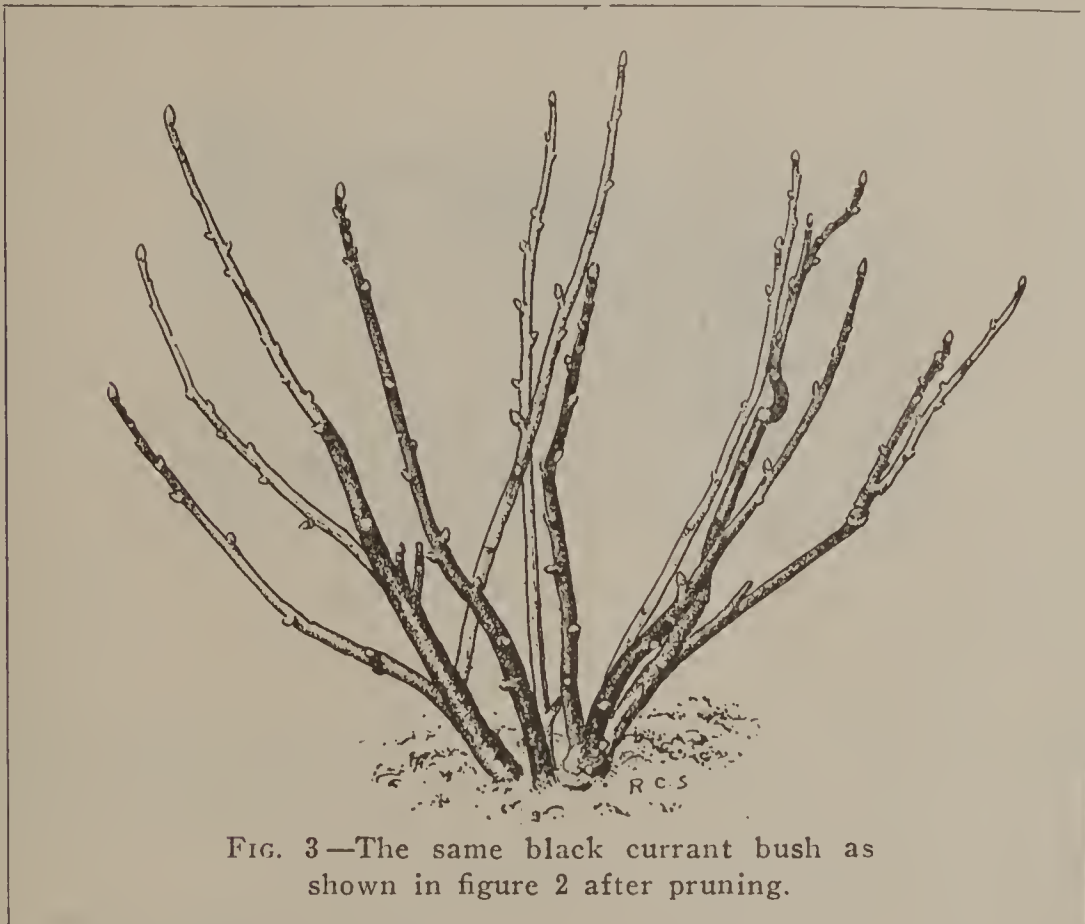


FIG. 3—The same black currant bush as shown in figure 2 after pruning.

Cultivation.—The currant and gooseberry plantations ought to be thoroughly cultivated all through the growing season. They should have about the same attention in this respect that tomatoes and other vegetables receive.

Fertilizers.—Stable manure is the best fertilizer to use. If two loads are applied before the plants are set, no more will be needed for the first year. Stable manure is a good thing to apply just before winter comes. Hen droppings are frequently used for gooseberries. Some may need more fertilizer than has been indicated; some may need less. Watch the growth of the plants and try putting on more or less fertilizer on parts of the field to find out just what is needed.

Pruning.—Six or eight main branches are needed to form a symmetrical top which will bear the most fruit. During the first two years, pruning will consist simply in cutting out the weakest shoots. Later, pruning will consist in cutting out the shoots which are three years old, and allowing strong young shoots to take the place of those cut out. Any branches lopping on the ground should be removed. (See figs. 2 and 3.)

Diseases and insects.—Generally the only serious pest in the plantation will

be the currant worm. Dusting the leaves with hellebore, at the rate of 1 pound of hellebore to 5 pounds of flour or air-slaked lime, will control the worm.

Yields.—During the first year no fruit will be secured. During the second year very little fruit will be borne. If the bushes have grown well, by the third year they should average a pint per plant; some plants may yield a quart or more. By the fourth year the plants will be in full bearing and should yield 2 to 6 quarts per bush.

Propagation.—Currants are propagated by cuttings. These are made by cutting off the shoots of the new growth in the fall after the leaves have dropped. These cuttings are usually made 8 or 10 inches long, and may be tied in bundles and buried in the ground until spring. They are then set out in rows about 6 inches apart and with not more than two buds left above the surface of the ground (fig. 4). In setting out cuttings, the soil should be packed about them very firmly. Under favorable conditions, cuttings that are planted in the nursery

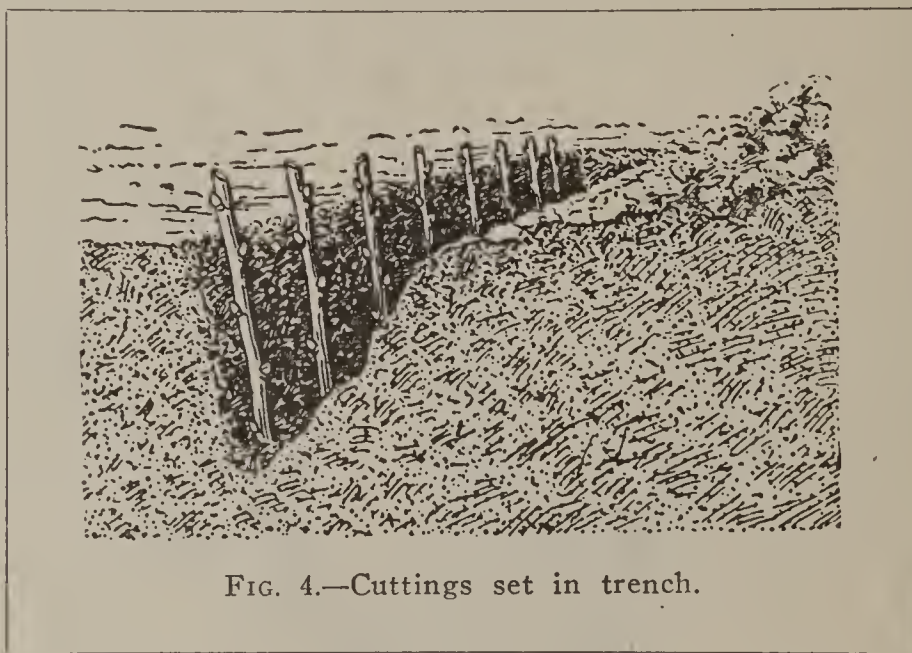


FIG. 4.—Cuttings set in trench.

in the spring will root and, if they grow well, they may be planted permanently the following autumn. Such plants are known as 1-year-old plants. If they have not grown vigorously they may be left in the nursery another season, when they will be what is termed 2-year-old plants.

Gooseberries are usually propagated by a method called "mound layering." Early in the spring a plant which is to serve as a "mother plant" is mounded up with soil so that not more than one-third or one-half of the shoots project above the mound of soil; the mound of soil must be made fairly compact about the plant. The shoots will send out roots into the soil mounded up about them. At the end of the season the soil is removed and the rooted shoots severed from the mother plant. They may be planted permanently then or lined out in a nursery row in much the same way as described for currant cuttings, though of course, at this time, the gooseberry cuttings would have some roots attached to them. As a rule gooseberries do not root as readily as currants and for this reason they are handled somewhat differently, as described.

